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THE TORQUE•TUBE

THE NEWS PUBLICATION FOR MEMBERS

OF THE 1937-1938 BUICK CLUB • FOUNDED 1980



VOLUME VI • NUMBER 6



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• William E. Olson, Editor •

• 842 Mission Hills Lane, Columbus, Ohio 43235 •

Ah, Spring!

Believe it or not, I am having a lot of trouble coming up with something entertaining or informative to say here. When this happens, one of course reverts to "small talk," which always gets around to the weather sooner or later--generally sooner. And, when one cannot think up something novel to say, he can always use what someone else has said. All that being so, we may observe that...

Now spring brings back balmy weather.

(Catullus, Odes, XLVI.)

(Could not have said it better myself.) And, balmy weather brings back the removing of car covers, the pumping-up of tires, the charging of batteries, the tweaking of chokes and priming of carburetors, and finally, the sweet singing of the Valve-in-Head-Silent-Oil-Cushioned-Eight.

Summer treads
On heels of spring.

(Horace, Odes, III, vii.)

And that being so, we need turn our thoughts, now that the Eights are singing, to Summer's Events. It appears there will be no Club event this year, but there are, nevertheless, plenty of good places to go.

First, of course, is the Buick Club of America National Meet in Flint, Michigan. I urge as many of you as can possibly make it to be there. On the way there, or back, take time out to visit the Henry Ford Museum in Dearborn,



FOUNDED BY DAVE LEWIS



Photo Feature



Through the courtesy--and persistence--of David Bylsma (#117, Hanover, MD), and Baltimore TV Channel 13, we are able to see this terrific scene from 50 years ago: three '38 Specials from the Accident Investigation Division, Baltimore Police Department, exit the old downtown station. The cars look a bit strange in their special paint, especially the wheels. David wondered about the absence of trim rings; these were part of a "standard accessory" group on 40-series touring sedans and sport coupes, and one assumes that The Police Department ordered the cars without these accessories to save a few dollars. Also of interest are the sidemount fenders: if the "cops" were interested in economy, why go for this at an extra \$50 or more per car? I can suggest two possible answers: (1) it was handy for the police to have two spares, since they would not have wanted to be immobilized by flat tires; and (2) the bulky two-way radio equipment used at the time took up a lot of room in the trunk.

David said he saw this picture fleetingly on TV one day, in a sequence of historical scenes of "old" Baltimore. He phoned the station, and, he says, talked to "just about everyone in the building" before finding the guy who had the negative. This gentleman willingly shared it with us, and deserves our thanks.

Numerous other police and fire departments used Buicks in the late 1930's. For example, I know the California Highway Patrol had 1938 Century two-doors. However, this is the first archival photo we have come up with. I think this is a potentially fertile ground for research. Most large city and state police headquarters have a librarian or public information officer who might be glad to help. Try it.

Michigan. The auto exhibit has recently been re-done, and I am told it is terrific. In truth, the entire Museum, plus adjacent Greenfield Village, easily justifies a stay of two or three days--there's so much interesting stuff there. And, there are several excellent BCA Regional Meets, not the least of which is my own Great Lakes Region event here in Columbus. A list of some of these with dates, places, phone numbers, etc., appears elsewhere herein.

Spring Fever and Balmy Weather having taken great toll. I will say no more, except to note that "balmy" in British slang means foolish or mildly crazy. Balmy is how I feel this April, so in a final Ode to Spring, I will give you the words of Sixteenth Century British poet Thomas Nash.

Spring, the sweet spring is the year's
pleasant king;
Then blooms each thing, then maids
dance in a ring.
Cold doth not sting, the pretty birds
do sing:
Cuckoo, jug-jug, pu-we, to-witta-woo!

To-witta-woo to you all too.





ANOTHER MYSTERY

THE FLYING DUTCHMAN OF WISCONSIN
(or learning about 1937 Buicks the hard way)

by Jack Shepherd (#138)

I will never forget the first 1937 and 1938 McLaughlin Buicks that I saw in the small town where I lived on Vancouver Island. Those long nosed beauties made quite an impression on me as a fifteen and then sixteen year old kid, whose only claim to fame was a double bar bicycle that was used for delivering the local newspaper.

In spite of my love affair with these Buicks, I never once investigated the marque with regard to series or body styles. I seemed content to assume these two years of Buick were all "Specials" although I had heard the name "Roadmaster" mentioned a few times. Except for a picture I'd seen of a 1938 convertible coupe in a magazine advertisement, I presumed that the body styles were basically three types--i.e., sedans, coaches (2 door sedans) and coupes.

---then World War II intervened---

It was 1944 before I saw my first 1938 convertible coupe which was owned by one of the surgeons at the military hospital in Vancouver, B.C. where I was convalescing--WOW!--. It was shortly after this that I happened to attend an old cinema featuring a film named "Dark Victory." It starred Bette Davis and in that picture there were a few shots of a 1938 Buick phaeton. So my knowledge of '38 Buicks had been increased slightly--but at the same time, I never expected I'd ever see such a phaeton. However, in 1948 I saw a for-sale advertisement in a Vancouver newspaper for a 1938 McLaughlin-Buick convertible sedan! Needless to say---I just had to have a look at this car. I immediately contacted the seller. This was to be my first viewing of a 1938 - 40 series sport phaeton. It was two WOW's! this time! The outcome was that I rushed the sale of my beat up 1940 Super Series Buick sedan (the first car I ever owned) to mortgage myself to the 1938 phaeton.

I was informed by the seller, who was the third owner, that the car had originally been purchased as one of the two '38 phaetons by the Canadian National Railway Company. These two phaetons served for several years as scenic tour cars at the company's prestigious hotel at Jasper National Park in Alberta. I was told that the cars were of special manufacture, plus being very limited in production and that my car was the only one of the two from Jasper that still existed. I was also told that these two '38 Buicks had been acquired to partially offset the competition by the Canadian Pacific Railway Company who in 1937 had purchased three 1937 La Salle sport phaetons to service their Banff Hotel in Banff National Park, Alberta--approximately 200 miles to the south of Jasper.

The foregoing gives you an idea of my total, but rather limited, insight in 1948 regarding '37 and '38 Buicks. As for the G.M. sport phaetons of that era, I took the simple approach;--I falsely concluded that G.M. had probably

only produced these models in the La Salle division for 1937 and then had turned to Buick for the majority of their 1938 production with La Salle producing the remainder. From 1948 until 1951 I smugly assumed that I was most likely the only guy in Canada who owned a 1938 Buick sport phaeton and except for one, or possibly two of the 1937 La Salle phaetons from Banff that may have survived, I had it all.

So keeping in mind my meager knowledge and also misconceptions with regard to the aforementioned cars, please continue with the following story when in 1951, I was travelling, in the '38 phaeton via U.S.A. highways, from Vancouver, B.C. to Montreal, Quebec to take a job with a company based in the latter city.

* * * * *



Jack Shepherd's first phaeton in a photo taken in 1951.

The date was May 26, 1951--the time was approximately 9:00 P.M. We were one hour west of and heading for bed-down in Madison, Wisconsin. Both my travelling companions were dozing in the back seat. I had been driving steadily for a tiring four hours and now in the last remaining moments of dusk we were burrowing through torrential rain. I was in the center lane, glued to the almost invisible center line of the highway, with lights on low beam to avoid the glare from the wall of falling rain. Not even the soaking of my left

shoulder and knee from the water that was trickling past the misaligned window frame and the chipped vent windows (love those convertibles!) could cast off the fatigue and dullness of my senses. I could feel the car veer and break speed whenever the wheels hit the sheets of water on the roadway. The rain was rebounding from the pavement and there was that fog-like mist clinging two feet or so above. We hadn't seen another car in fifteen minutes--then with only the slightest warning it happened-----!

At first I became vaguely aware of some faint blurred lights keeping apace with me on my right, but positioned slightly ahead and converging slowly. Next, with startling suddenness there was a car on my right, running parallel to me in the outer lane at the same speed and approximately two car lengths ahead-----!

IT WAS MY CAR!!---IT WAS A PALE PHANTOM-LIKE PLAIN BACK PHAETON!

But it can't be my car, I thought, My car is under me and I'm driving it. It can't be over in the next lane!

My still dulled, but by now startled, senses refusing to believe in phantoms, fumbled for a solution to explain the source of this eerie sight---

---then came the answer---

It's a reflection of my shining wet car imaged on a rain-soaked high cement retaining wall that must be bounding the edge of the highway.---Yes, that's it!

But the idea of a reflection was soon rejected by the following, more common sense deductions---

How can a reflection be created if the body of my car is not illuminated? My car is in almost complete darkness, except for the forward projecting head light beams---and how is it possible for me to see a reflection of the rear of my car when the reflection is positioned two car lengths ahead of me? Now, if the reflection was a partial front-end view of my approaching car, then that would be understandable, but a rear view?---NO WAY!

---then, what the hell is this damn ____?

At this exact instant, to completely dispel any remaining conjectures of phantoms, reflections or more mental searching, my windshield was hit with sheets of spray from the wheels of the misty phaeton ahead. The explanation was simple---

It's another Plain Back PHAETON!!

The final realization that I was seeing another car identical to mine was more shocking than my original thought that it was an apparition of my own car. My senses were now at full alert.

As I studied the phaeton in the periphery of my headlight beam, through the spray, mist and rain, its color became recognizable as grey/tan. Closer scrutiny revealed the dim outline of a projecting rear signal light in the center of the trunk lid. This triggered the following train of thought....

That looks like a 1937 Buick. But it can't be--Buick never produced a sport phaeton in 1937. It must be a La Salle--but a '37 Buick----NAAH! But I wonder--I wonder if just maybe Buick di---?---Hey MAN! I've got to get a look at the front end of that car!

I started to overtake the phaeton, receiving another dousing of spray for my effort. As I managed to pull slightly ahead of abreast, in those last moments before total darkness, faint illumination, possibly from my parking lamp and/or some headlight rays deflecting from the converging spray of two cars, allowed me to glimpse the front section of the hood of the phaeton--the side louvers appeared to be those of Buick--the pattern of the grill portion visible above the headlight was that of thin, horizontal, closely-spaced bars! Definitely a 1937 Buick!

Then Buick did produce a 1937 Phaeton!--
well, I'll be a */x!-?! - so and so -

The crazy idea of attempting to flag down the '37 had just started to form my next thought when the object of my attention began, slowly at first and then more quickly, to drift away from me to the right and at the same time upward. Then it suddenly faded out like a ghost into the mist, rain and darkness.

----Damn!----It had taken an exit ramp from the main highway.

I would estimate that the complete foregoing episode took no more than 50-60 seconds. The eeriness of this brief encounter with the phantom-like phaeton has always reminded me of the legend of the mythical sailing ship, "The Flying Dutchman"--hence, my title for this story.

I've often wondered these many years since, what the odds were of two Buick sport phaetons meeting briefly and racing beside each other on a deserted highway, approximately thirteen to fourteen years after both cars were born. The other gnawing question has been--did the driver of the '37 phaeton see my car and if so, what were his thoughts?

---I'll never know---

I'm afraid that my 1938 is likely no more, as it required major overhaul throughout and not having the necessary funds, I reluctantly had to sell the car in the fall of 1952 in Montreal.

I've always been enamored by the G.M. sport phaetons of 1937 and 1938 and I swore that I'd get one again someday to replace my 1938, but it took twenty-nine years to fulfill that promise. It was 1981 when I purchased my 1937 - 60 series phaeton. The car is presently painted green. However, the firewall tag states that the color was originally samarra beige. Now you know the more I've thought over the years about the grey/tan colored phaeton that I met that night in 1951, the more I've become convinced that it was painted samarra beige. Although I know little of the early history of my car that I purchased in California, I like to imagine that my car may, originally have been that same '37 phaeton from Wisconsin--Well! Why not!

In fact, on my return from an occasional Saturday night visit to the Legion for a couple of beers, I sometimes go down to the shed where my '37 Century sits. There I relive the night in May 1951 when I met the phantom phaeton. It's at this time that my car becomes the "Flying Dutchman of Wisconsin."

P.S. - My car is soon to undergo a restoration and the final job will be new paint--Guess what color it's going to be!

Flying Dutchman - A Phantom sailing ship said to be seen in stormy weather off the Cape of Good Hope, and thought to forebode ill luck. One form of the legend has it that the ship is doomed never to enter a port on account of a murder committed on board; another, that the captain, a Dutchman, swore a profane oath that he would weather the Cape though he should tack there till the last day. He was taken at his word, and here he still tacks, but never succeeds in rounding the point. He sometimes hails vessels and requests them to take letters home from him. The legend is supposed to have originated in the sight of some ship reflected from the clouds. It has been made the groundwork of one or two novels and of Wagner's opera (Der Fliegende Holländer).

Above quoted from the Encyclopedia Americana
1938 Edition, Volume 11, Page 407



Jack Shepherd's present 1937 60-C. The sharp-eyed will note there are a few items missing, and that the fit of the hood's not the best, but all this will be remedied in time.



Remembrance of Things Past



PAUL CULP RIDES AGAIN

To those who have not figured it out: the last issue's "Cover Car" was-- once again-- Paul ("Tad," #508) Culp, Jr.'s 1938 Century. The reason Paul's car is so often on the cover is, of course, that Paul sends me many cover-worthy photos, something few other people do. Having just finished a major engine rebuild, Paul couldn't wait for spring to try things out, and I hope for his (and the car's) sake that salt is not applied to roads in Bucks County, PA by the megaton as it is in Ohio. "A la Recherche du Temps Perdu" is the title in the original French of Marcel Proust's interminably-long novel in seven parts, "Remembrance of Things Past." Thus, my caption for "Cover Car" was an allusion to: (1) the re-creation of scenes of the past; (2) the appearance of the '38 Century on several past covers; and (3) the fact that in the near-past ("A Buick Fable"; Vol. IV, No. 6) we presented a scene very similar to last issue's covered bridge picture. Now, do you not believe this is the world's cleverest, most cerebral, antique car mag?




 18th-Century Burgess-Foulke House, Quakertown,
 PA plus Paul Culp's 20th-Century Century.
 





TECHNICAL TIPS

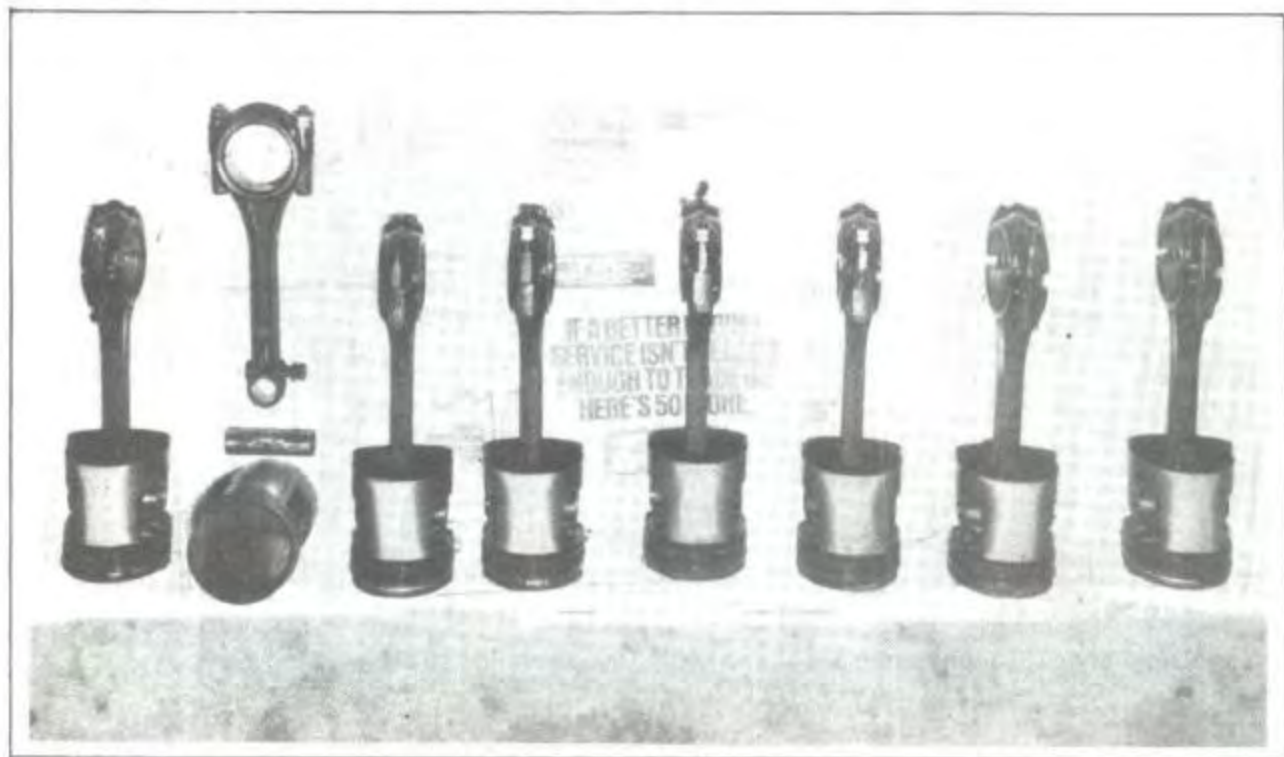


HOME-MADE BODY-WORK FRAME

Dave Lewis is working on a 1938 Limited. Finding that the rear interior fender panels (the part of the main body inside the fenders) were badly rusted where the fenders join the body, Dave saw that he would need to do some cutting and welding. It is, however, very difficult to weld up. If Dave could turn the body over, he could weld down. So, he made the frame you see in the photo. The diagonal braces which pass through the door and windshield openings hold the body firmly in the frame. Cost of lumber and hardware was about \$50, and the frame is made in about four hours. With two helpers, Dave could roll the body over. (Of course, one needs plenty of room.) Note the support placed through the rear quarter window openings, which keeps the body from tipping while it is upside-down.

Welding was very easy with the car in this position. "I was also able to repair the rocker panels very easily," says Dave; "with the car in an upright position, none of this would or could be done properly." This also gave Dave the opportunity to patch some small holes in the trunk floor with fiberglass mat applied to the underside. The mat will be obscured by the gas tank when the car is finished, and the fiberglass that has oozed through the holes will be smoothed flat on the trunk floor. (This technique will not, of course, work for large holes or a heavily-deteriorated trunk floor.)

Engine Rebuilding-Part 1: Getting Started



As promised last time, we are here beginning a series of articles by Paul B. Culp, Jr. (#508), setting forth his experiences in doing a major engine rebuild. As usual, Paul took excellent photographs every step of the way, and--we hope--the pictures will make a big difference in understanding the text and showing the progress of the work. These articles will not pretend to be a detailed, definitive treatise, but will nevertheless, I think, impart a good deal of useful knowledge.

Some time ago, Paul wrote to me saying that he was using a lot of oil and had heavy oil fumes coming from the breather pipe. Dave Lewis and I concluded that Paul's oil rings were bad; little did we know how bad things really were, and as it turned out the oil rings were not the major culprit. Surprisingly--to me, anyway--the engine had pretty good compression, even though the top compression rings were largely gone. I will let Paul take up the story from here.

ARTICLE AND PHOTOS BY PAUL B. CULP, JR.

This is the first of a series of articles with photos that we hope will help fellow members. To quote a famous humanitarian and monarch: "There is nothing new under the sun." So it is with this exercise. How many engines have been rebuilt? How many Buick engines? How many straight-eight Buicks? The numbers are probably in the tens of thousands. In my case, however, it is the first Buick, although I'd done some engine work in the past. My first engine rebuild was on my old 6-volt Volkswagen from college. Since then, I

have done valve jobs, bearing work, ring jobs, and head work on many different vehicles.

With this background and the help of my father, who started it all in 1941 when he bought the '37 Buick Century we still have, I was prepared to tackle major motor work. Only the confidence gained through the Torque Tube and the fellow members of the '37/38 Buick Club assured me the success of the project. To all are due much appreciation and thanks.

When I bought my '38/61 in April 1976 for \$250, somehow I knew it needed work--that I could see. Yes, the body was tired but after a day of fiddling we got the engine running. We accumulated about twenty miles of driving on our back roads before it was stored indefinitely some miles from my home.

Enter the '37/38 Buick Club. Although we'd been restoring my father's '37/68 since 1974, in 1984 it still looked like another ten years before we would have that Buick finished. At Hershey 1985 I got news about a '37/38 Buick Club and promised myself to join after the first of the year. Perhaps this would motivate me. As it turned out, because I was so impressed with the Newsletter, I realized that with its information, technical help, parts ads and sharing of knowledge, I could accomplish my goals.

It started with a breakdown of labor, parts, and time to finish the '37/68. This was impressive, but not unreasonable. I then pondered over my '38/61 at the garage in Blooming Glen, PA. The estimate of time and expense needed to put it on the road was far less than what was needed on the '37, which was in full restoration. Without laboring the process of resurrection, I had the '38/61 running and on the road with new tires, brakes, hoses, belts, windshields, steering wheel, paint, bumpers and front end in 9 months after joining the Club--On the road again!

Once on the road I discovered high oil consumption and a wet undercarriage. After a year and a half I wrote the Torque Tube about the problem. The answer confirmed my opinion that a ring job was needed. So as soon as the weather warmed I decided "off with its head". I was most anxious on that first weekend in May to have this ring job behind me. I knew from inspection and adjustment that my bottom end was in good shape. Both main and rod bearings were to specs and the oil pump was working at capacity. Perhaps after I replaced the rings I would touch up the valves if I had time, so I could have the car on the road for the summer shows and touring. Then I could get back to work on our '37/68 while using the '38 as the fun car.

Before tearing the engine down I flushed the system in order to help cure overheating problems. I then proceeded to remove the hood sides, then the carburetor and its lines and linkage. The exhaust pipe was removed along with the intake/exhaust manifolds. It came off as one piece despite its multi-parts. Rust and idleness had attacked the joints. At this point, the coolant had returned to ambient temperature at which point I removed it along with the upper and lower radiator hoses. After the thermostat housing and its short hose was disconnected, I proceeded with the head. First the valve covers, then the oil line to the valve train, then I loosened all sixteen valve adjusting nuts. The nuts on the rocker pedestals were removed so that the complete rocker shaft could be lifted clear. The push rod cover was removed and all of the push rods were placed in a wood block, keeping their sequence in order (1 to 16). Buick engineers have designed this assembly so that the head, even the entire engine, can be removed by lifting at the rocker shaft. With no plans at that point, however, for engine removal and working under the hood, my only concern was to make that cylinder head as light as possible! Next were the 22

head bolts, and then with numerous hammer blows and carefully placed wedges between the head and the block, I was able to break the bond. Because of the two long studs from the block, I needed to get the head separated from the block by about 4 inches. This was accomplished by placing and working wood shims under the head until I could slide the head sideways onto a long board and from there to the workbench as it passed over the left front fender.

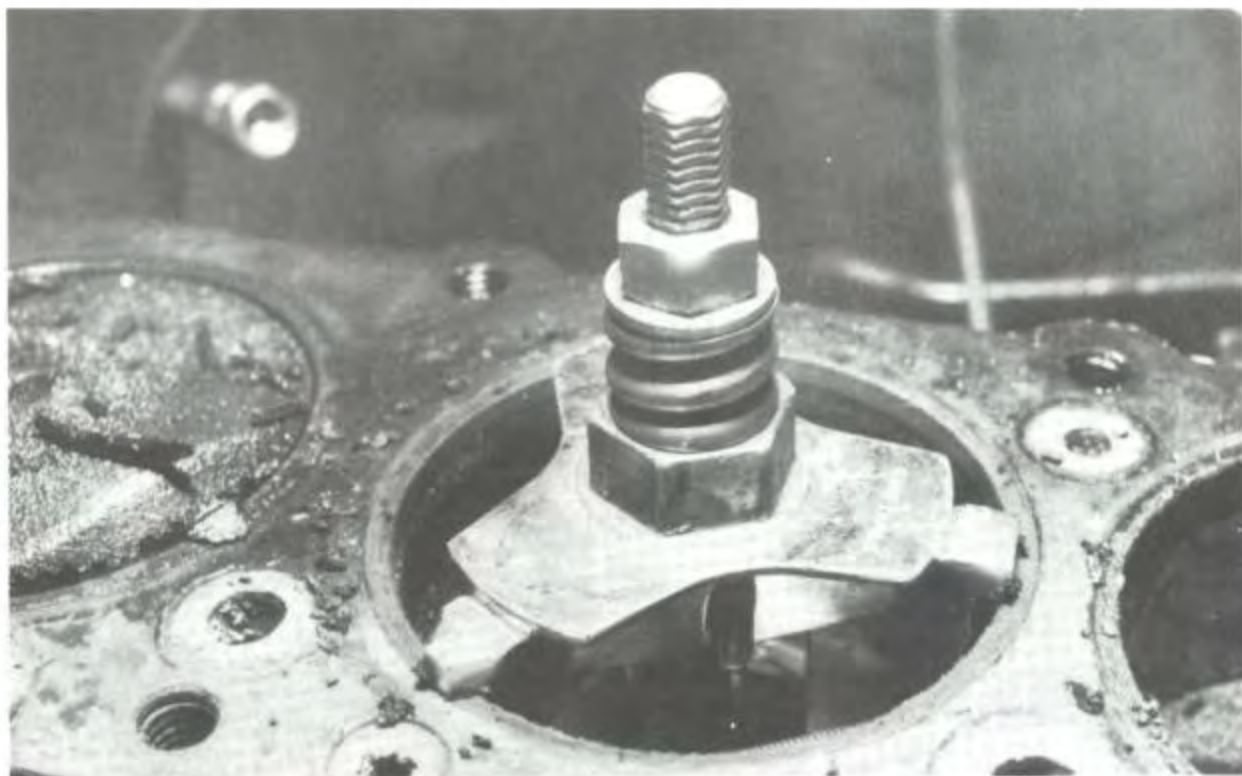
The hour was late and I was pleased with my progress at this point. But, before shutting down, I decided to inspect the bores to see how they were wearing. I noticed pitting from rust due to many idle years. This was no real concern but when I saw long streaks that my fingernail could skip over, I got a bit nervous. Upon even closer inspection into the bores, I realized that the dome on the '38 pistons looked like it had been attacked by mice. Now, for years I'd had problems in that garage in Blooming Glen with mice, and I'd read articles in the National Geographic about the destructive capabilities of mice, but this truly was a new chapter. Or was there something even more threatening than mice in the combustion chamber?

Exhausted and confused I retreated for the evening thinking about those mice. Is it possible? Why eat aluminum? In the Encyclopedia Britannica I read that night that mice could eat through lead pipe. But how could they have gotten in there? My thoughts that night as I fell asleep were of the Buick and an army of mice lined up at the carburetor preparing for their descent into the depths of the engine block!



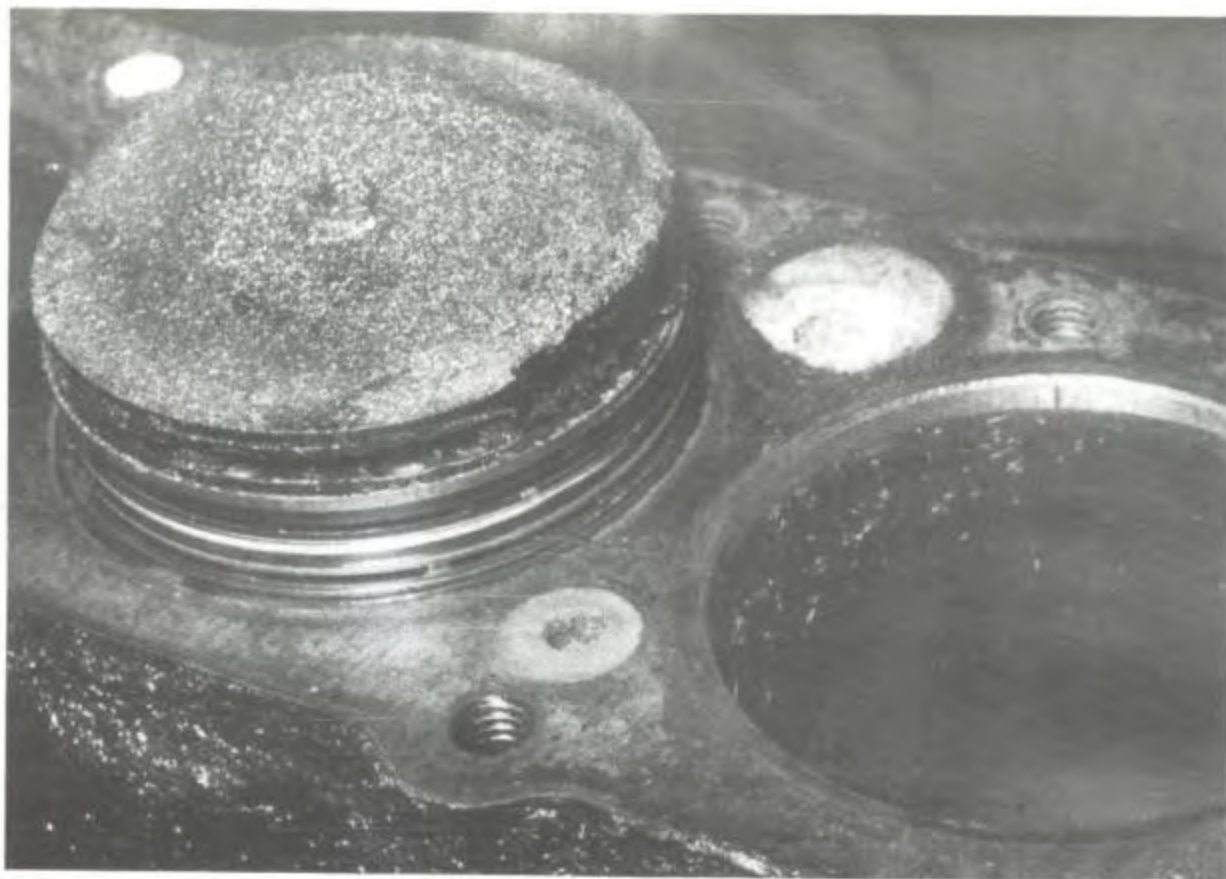
Oil pan removed from engine. That's the pump float in the pan at upper left; it doesn't really belong there.

The next day I was determined to find the solution. After draining the oil and lowering the stabilizing (roll) bar, I removed the dozens of bolts and had the pan in hand. This revealed more problems. I had earlier placed two small magnets in the pan along with the magnet on the drain plug. These looked like they came out of a grade school science course demonstration on the workings of magnetism. Could worn or broken rings have this affect to score the cylinder walls? At this time I removed the ridge from the top of all 8 bores. It required considerable cutting with the ridge reamer--another bad sign concerning cylinder wear. (The world's oldest auto manufacturer has a factory standard for general cylinder wear that should not exceed .0004 per 6,214 miles, approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ thousands per 1 inch every 7,500 miles). I was preparing myself for the worst as I loosened the connecting rod bolts.



Ridge reamer in use. As it turned out, there was no reason to bother with this.

With a light tapping action of a hammer on a long stick I pushed the piston through the block until all four rings were clear. Upon climbing to top side from underneath, I was met by reality and the source of my high oil consumption. The piston had no top ring! The compression ring was gone but, as it went, it left its marks in the bore and destroyed the piston groove and surrounding material. The ring job had just graduated to a piston job. But new pistons would not solve the excessive wear in the top of the bores; thus, the only solution was a rebore. Not only one cylinder but all eight of them were victims of the same cause--cracked upper rings. Very advanced spark and pre-ignition could cause this, or a previous piston and a ring job that was improperly done; i.e., the mechanic failed to remove the ridge, thus causing the upper or compression ring to collapse from the extreme unit pressure of the ridge. This was confirmed by Bob Pipkin and my father, Paul B. Culp, Sr. They believe the latter condition to be the culprit.



Top of one piston showing damage caused by failure to remove cylinder wall ridge in a past ring job. The upper compression ring has been destroyed.

I needed three weeks to recover from the shock so as to establish my game plan. Could I rebore in the car? There are systems that will work and shops that will make field calls. Honing was out of the question because of the wide difference in bore diameters. The roundness was at the end of the tolerance but the bore taper was extreme with up to a .017 slope/clearance between the piston and the cylinder. But the main problem in this type of repair would be the introduction of contaminants to the engine. If this repair was attempted, boring and honing operations would leave a residue which would become a lapping compound and destroy the engine from within. The only solution was to make the repairs to the block out of the car.

With a refreshed commitment I attacked the Buick a month after the initial work of head removal. The hood was removed and the wiring was disconnected. The fenders and side mount brackets were loosened. With the help of a floor jack at the front and two stands under the fenders, my father and I proceeded to remove the last of the bolts and slide the front end from the car as a complete unit. Fortunately, my father had long ago installed a one-ton hoist on the front of his garage. With the front end removed and positioned clear of the car, I was prepared to remove the engine and transmission. The engine mount bolts were first removed, then the front floor mat. This revealed the transmission cover and rod. This was out with 6 bolts so that the transmission would clear the firewall. The electric, fuel and



Handy hoist gets "thumbs up" from Paul, III.



His engine hanging like a side of beef, author Paul, Jr. understandably looks a bit grave as he contemplates the work to come.



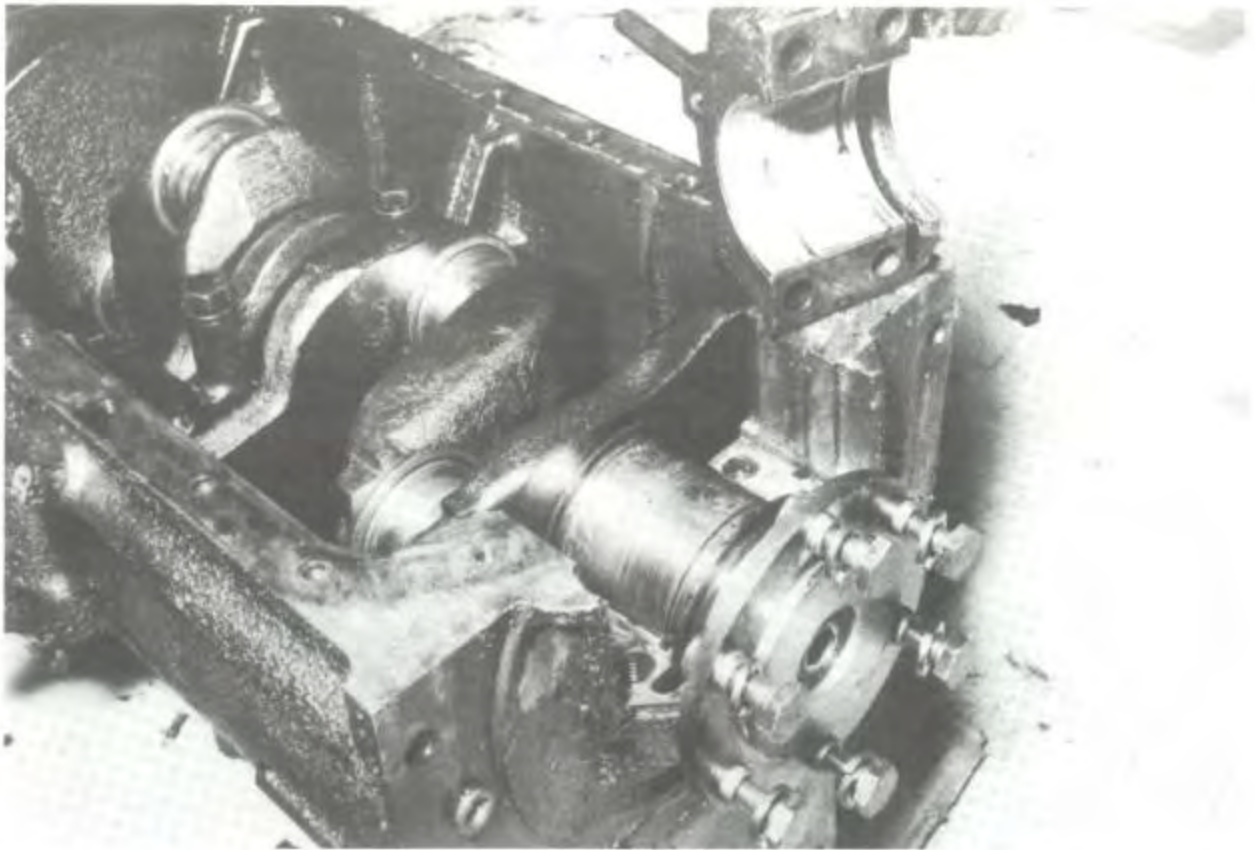
Paul B. Culp, III forlornly contemplates the dismembering of Dad's fun car.

vacuum lines were disconnected along with the oil and temp sender lines. The six bolts securing the torque tube to the rear of the transmission were removed after the car was positioned under the hoist. Trying to balance the engine/transmission combination is an art and is better accomplished with a special purpose balancer.

After a few pulls on the one-ton hoist, the engine popped loose from the car. With the car backed out of the way I could see the complete unit and marveled how the car was engineered. The transmission was separated, then the flywheel, front balancer, generator, starter, fuel and water pumps, distributor, timing chain, sprocket, tappets and camshaft. Only the block and crankshaft were to go to the machine shop for work.

It would cost just under \$100 to have all 8 cylinders rebored to .060 oversize. This would make the diameter 3.497 from the original 3.437 or 3-7/16. In my case, I had a factory oversize engine which was .010 oversize. (This can be determined by a careful note of the engine members. That is, at the right side of the block numbers there are numbers with a long dash, like a minus sign but longer. Example: 63484703---.) An .030 oversize piston was inadequate, .040 was enough for boring only, and I couldn't get .050--so the size was .060.

The bore diameters are measured at the top, middle and bottom. The bottom has the least wear, whereas the top would reveal the most wear. Measurements are made with an inside micrometer or telescoping gauge or inside calipers, along with a 3-4 inch micrometer or dial caliper.



Removing main bearing cup so that crank can be removed from block. In this photo, the rods and pistons have already been removed.

EDITOR'S NOTE: I trust everyone will understand what happened to Paul's engine as a consequence of the sloppy repair work done years ago. As the pistons move up and down (remember, each one travels perhaps a half-mile for each mile the car travels) the rings naturally wear away the cylinder walls. Since the wear tends to be greater at the top, and since the top ring does not reach to the top of the bore at TDC, a ridge gradually forms at the top of the bore. The ridge is the part that has not been worn. It might be assumed that new rings could be installed without removing the ridge: if the top ring did not reach that far up in the bore before, it shouldn't again, right? An unwarranted and dangerous assumption! Nothing will be precisely the same after the ring job as it was before: the bearings may be a trifle tighter, the new rings perhaps a trifle thicker. Or things may loosen a bit in time, the crank may whip a trifle more. All it takes is a tiny fraction of an inch, and if the top ring starts hitting that ridge, something will have to give. Of necessity, it will be the ring, and a breaking-up ring can do all sorts of nasty damage.

Paul's conjectures of mice marching through his manifolds were not so wild as might be supposed. There is, as we lawyers say, ample precedent for such a conclusion. Long-time member Jon Lee (#274; Brunswick, ME) lost the oil filler cap from his '38 Special convertible. Being a believer in not fixing things until they're really broken, Jon didn't bother about this until much later, when he decided to find out why oil put in the top took a long time to get to the bottom. Removal of the rocker arm cover revealed a good deal of fluffy material not there originally: mice nests. There is virtually no end to the places into which mus musculus can penetrate, and persons are well-advised not to leave cars open in a garage or to store edible material where cars are kept. Cats are not a good solution, since they like to walk on cars and to pee on car covers.

LOAD LEVELER FOR CHAIN HOIST

Here's a gadget Paul discovered after he'd pulled the engine, but--fortunately--before he tried to put it back in. The leveler is suspended at one point on the chain hoist, and the engine/transmission from two points on the leveler. Turning the crank will adjust balance of the load and, according to Paul, "minute adjustments are possible as the engine is lowered and moved into position." He bought this one--two ton capacity--from Harbor Freight Salvage Company for \$32.50 plus shipping: well worth the price. Call 800-423-2567. If you don't have a chain hoist mounted on your garage--and, let's face it, most of us don't--you can buy from the same firm a mobile shop crane for \$300. The mobile crane will work only where fenders, radiator, grille, etc., have been removed from the car.



TEMPERATURE SENDING UNITS

One item that Paul mentions in passing which I think deserves special attention: disconnecting the temperature gage sending line. (Never having been able to handle the spelling with a "u" in it, I have resolved to use "gage" which is equally correct.)

This apparatus is easily broken, and very difficult to repair, and new old stock units have become extremely scarce.

The unit "consists of an indicator on the dash connected to a bulb by means of a capillary tube. The bulb is mounted in the cylinder head. Care should be used to prevent damage to bulb or capillary tube during service

operations." (1937 Shop Manual, p. 108.) The bulb, tube and gage are a single unit. Do not attempt to take this apart. There is some kind of liquid inside the tube which will spill out. The trick is to get the bulb, which is thin-walled brass or copper, out of the head without breaking it. If there is any resistance at all, one is well-advised to soak the fitting with penetrating oil for a day or two. Once the bulb and fitting are out of the head, the tube may be carefully bent out of the way before the engine is pulled out.

PAINT: WHEEL STRIPES

Through the efforts of Thomas Schuttish (#006), we have discovered that 1937 wheel stripe color Pimpernel Scarlet is still made by DuPont and still carries the last four digits of its 1937 code number: 2622. It's one of DuPont's "fleet colors." Pimpernel Scarlet was the wheel stripe color used with Samarra Beige (508), Wellington Grey (505), Windsor Grey (506), and Bengal Brown (509). For those who have seen or remember Southern Pacific red-and-gray diesel locomotives, the red is Pimpernel Scarlet. (It shades toward orange rather than toward maroon as some reds do.) It may well be that some of the other stripe colors still exist as well, and we are checking this out. (Thom also points out that "Scarlet Pimpernel" is a wild flower of the genus Anagallis, whose flowers close at the approach of bad weather, and that "The Scarlet Pimpernel" was a 1930's movie starring Leslie Howard. How about all that?)

Thom's letter to me also brought up a subject that has been treated several times before but, nevertheless, apparently continues to confuse people: 1937 wheel colors.

ALL 1937 WHEELS WERE PAINTED THE SAME COLOR AS THE BODY OF THE CAR.

All means all: every cotton-pickin' one of 'em. Stating the rule another way:

THERE WERE NO OPTIONAL WHEEL COLORS IN 1937.

No means none. Please, 1937 owners, forget and put permanently away all notions of gray cars with red wheels, blue cars with gray wheels, etc., etc., etc.. It's wrong, and the evidence from the Master Parts Books and other original literature is very clear. (This is not to imply that people who fancied a bit of customizing could not have, or did not, repaint their wheels. I did exactly that on some cars I had years ago. We are talking about authenticity here, not whimsy.)

The confusion appears to arise out of some old DuPont paint charts that do not show wheels with separate columns for base color and stripes, but rather show the colors in this manner:

Chancellor Blue
Roi Grey

Wellington Grey
Pimpernel Scarlet

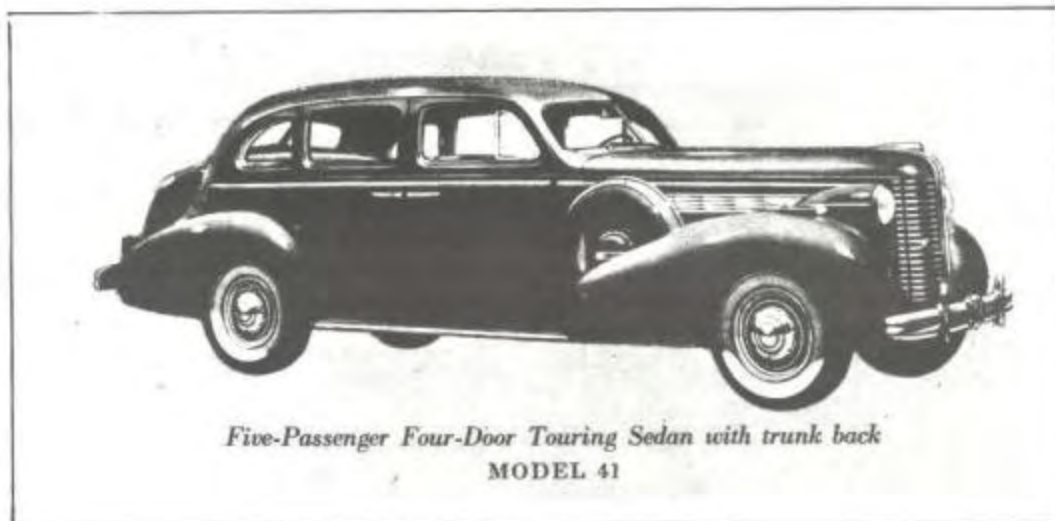
and so forth. In such charts, the second color is plainly the stripe color. What else could it be? If an optional base color, what was the stripe color--body color? The charts do not make sense if read that way; moreover, the Buick (not DuPont) literature spells it all out very clearly. 1938 DuPont paint charts do it this way:

<u>No.</u>	<u>Body</u>	<u>Wheel Color</u>	<u>Optional Wheel Color</u>
315	Rembrandt Black	Black Silver	Dante Red Silver

and so forth. (The second color in each column is, again, the stripe. If there had been optional wheel colors in 1937, DuPont 1937 charts would have been set up the same way, and they ain't.

I suspect that all of this stems from a desire on the part of 1937 owners to be as flashy as 1938 owners, a desire so powerful that it has lead to the contorting of evidence, the manufacture of sand castles, and the setting of conclusions on wishful thinking.

If you wish to paint wheels in non-authentic colors, you may well do so despite all I can say, and have said. You may well win prizes. (Indeed, an AACA Grand National prize-winning 1937 black Special, owned by a member whom I shall not name, and restored by another member, whom I shall not name, has red wheels.) Just remember it ain't correct, and if I have to tell you again, you will be sent to your rooms.



HEADLIGHTS AND AUXILIARY LAMPS

The following article, which originally appeared in the December 1980 issue of Skinned Knuckles, will, I believe, tell almost everyone something he did not know about headlights, auxiliary lamps, and light circuits. The article has been shortened to eliminate material not applicable to 1937 and 1938 Buicks. (Thanks to the editor's of Skinned Knuckles and to Mike Braden #572, Glasgow, MT.)



Tune-up Your Headlights

Pre-1940 Cars

Sealed beam headlamps were installed as factory equipment on all U.S.-built passenger cars on 1940 models except Crosley, Bantam, Willys, and Graham, and immediately the lighting equipment of approximately 30 million cars then on the road became essentially obsolescent. The vastly superior road illumination, which did not tend to seriously diminish with time, prompted many owners of pre-1940 cars to retrofit sealed beam equipment. The car collector of today, however, in the interests of authenticity, is often faced with the necessity of doing the best he can to get along with basically inferior lighting equipment on his collector car.

While it is unlikely that the owner of an antique or pre-1940 vehicle can expect to get night illumination equivalent to that provided in modern cars, it should be possible to tune up the system so that his car can be operated safely during the hours of darkness. Many owners are understandably reluctant to even operate an antique car at night, but in case one is delayed on a trip or tour, it behooves the owner to have some capability for such emergency situations. It is the purpose of this article to offer some suggestions for improvement of your lighting equipment.

Auxiliary Driving Lamps

A pair of auxiliary driving lamps was popular accessory equipment in the pre-1940 era and still is today on antique cars. They will go a long way toward remedying an inferior lighting situation. Auxiliary lamps are available in both regular and sealed beam versions, and while it is a moot question if sealed beam auxiliary lamps will be regarded as authentic in all quarters for pre-1940 cars, there is always the possibility that they can be readily removed for critical judging in car shows.

Auxiliary lamps are often used carelessly, being aimed more or less willy-nilly, the attitude being that they are there for looks, not effectiveness. But if properly aimed and adjusted, they can contribute about 100% in improved lighting. Lighting experts suggest that the left auxiliary lamp be connected to the high beam circuit to give improved lighting down the road. The right auxiliary should be connected to the low beam circuit and aimed to illuminate the right shoulder of the road.

— SKINNED KNUCKLES

The use of auxiliary lamps imposes an extra burden on the lamp circuits, with the result that excessive voltage drop may reduce the output of the entire light system to the point where nothing is gained by adding the extra lamps. It is essential that clean, tight connections be used throughout the lighting circuits, and in some cases the wiring size may have to be increased or light circuit relays be employed in order to realize the full advantages of auxiliary illumination.

The Lamp Circuits

The candlepower of any lamp bulb is very sensitive to voltage. A ten percent reduction of voltage applied to the lamp bulb results in a 30 percent reduction in candlepower, while a 20 percent reduction reduces the candlepower by almost one half! When you consider that there are as many as 10 to 20 connections in the typical headlight circuit from one battery post back through the frame of the car to the other battery post, and many of these connections are casual metal to metal contacts subject to all kinds of corrosion, it is a wonder that our headlamps on the old iron work with any degree of efficiency whatsoever.

The slightest bit of corrosion anywhere in the lamp circuit can, and often does, cause a significant loss in voltage at the lamp. The first thing to check, of course, are the battery terminals, cables, and ground strap, but you will probably already have taken care of these points in routine maintenance.

To check voltage drop in the lighting circuit, a low voltage DC voltmeter will be most useful. If the test prods that come with the meter are not adequate, replace one with a lead about six feet long with a large battery clip on the end. Solder a sharp prod to the end of the other lead. Connect the battery clip to a good ground on the frame or to the grounded terminal of the battery. Touch the other lead to the lamp body. With the upper beam on, there should be no reading of the voltmeter. If there is, it indicates that the lamp body is poorly grounded to the frame of the car. The lamp mounting bolts should be sanded to remove rust and the assembly tightened. Test again, and if the condition persists, check the connection between the fender

and frame for rust and corrosion. Tighten the fender bolts and headlight mounting bar bolts if the car has them. In extreme cases it may be necessary to solder a ground wire from fender to frame, but this should rarely be necessary;

Next attach the battery clip of the voltmeter lead to a hot terminal on the car — either the ungrounded battery terminal or the hot side of the starter switch. Turn on the high beams and pierce the insulation on the high beam lead with the sharp tip of the other test lead as near the headlamp socket as possible. A voltage drop greater than 0.4 volt with a 21 cp lamp or 0.6 volt with a 32 cp lamp is considered excessive (6 volt system). If the voltage drop is excessive, all connections and elements in the lighting circuit must be checked. To check the units, leave the battery clip of the voltmeter on the hot terminal. With the high beam on, apply the test prod in turn to the ammeter terminals, fuse holder, lighting switch terminals, and the foot dimmer switch. If excessive voltage drop is discovered in any of these units, improve the contact by sanding or replace the unit.

Other sources of trouble in old cars may be traced to frayed or broken strands in the wires, corroded terminals, or poor insulation due to wear or soaking with oil. In many cases the only solution is complete replacement of the wiring.

The Lens and Reflector

In almost every case, the lenses on a given make of car were designed to be used with reflectors from the same lens manufacturer. The use of mismatched lenses and reflectors is quite likely to result in improper light distribution. Most lenses will have a notch or lug so they can be mounted only in a certain way, and the use of incorrect lenses for a given make of car is a practice to be discouraged. The lens gasket should not be neglected in restoration — a dried out or broken gasket will allow moisture and dust to get inside the lens and on the reflector.

The reflector must be thoroughly clean and highly polished. Only a silver reflecting surface will give satisfactory results. Chrome plated or nickel plated reflectors are relatively inefficient, yielding only about 60 to 70 percent the reflectivity of a polished silver plated reflector. So if your restoration shop suggests use of chrome plating on the reflectors, don't do it, unless you plan never to use your car at night.

Never touch the surface of a silvered reflector as finger prints will quickly tarnish it. Clean the reflector by dusting with a soft cloth. Reflectors can be polished with a mixture of lamp black and alcohol applied with a cotton or chamois swab. Rub very lightly in a radial direction (center to edge) but never in a circular motion around the reflector. Commercial silver polishes cannot be recommended as they are too harsh and remove too much of the plating. If the reflector does not polish

up because the silver is worn through, it should be replated or replaced. A bent reflector cannot be straightened accurately to its original contour, and it should be discarded.

The Lamp Bulb

Lamp bulbs which have begun to show signs of blackening on the inside of the glass are near the end of useful life and should be replaced at once. Be sure to use the lamp bulb recommended by the manufacturer of your car. When replacing bulbs with bayonet bases such as 1000, 1158, or 1116, be sure to refocus the headlamps after bulb replacement. Most cars starting about 1934 or 1935 use the prefocused type 2320 or 2330 bulb. No refocusing is required for these lamp bulbs, but be sure that the three hold down lugs on the socket enter the slots in the bulb base flange; then turn the bulb to the right so that the lugs are in the extreme ends of the slots.

Aiming the Lamps

It is almost impossible to supply brief aiming instructions that will remain in accordance with all manufacturers' recommendations. We checked a few owners' manuals and shop manuals, and the headlight aiming instructions, while basically similar, differ considerably in fine detail. Some specify aiming while the car is empty and others with the weighting of the normal complement of passengers. We even found one set of instructions calling for aiming with the lenses removed! There is some universal agreement: all instructions we read call for aiming on the high beam; the design of the lamp then automatically takes care of the low beam. The other area of agreement is that aiming should be done on a screen exactly 25 feet from the front of the headlamps — how that distance was arrived at, I haven't the faintest idea.

Preferably you should follow the instructions of the manufacturer of the particular make and model of your car as outlined in shop and service manuals; however, if information is not available for your car, you may safely use the data from the following pages for headlight aiming as taken from *MoToR* magazine for January 1940.

4 For correct aiming, the headlamps must be adjusted both laterally (side to side) and vertically (up and down). To establish lateral and vertical aim, set a screen (garage wall may do), exactly 25 feet in front of the headlamps on level ground. Sight down the centerline of the vehicle through the exact center of the rear window and over the radiator cap to the screen and mark a vertical line on the screen (tape will do). [This method of getting the centerline assumes that your car "tracks" perfectly — not always the case.] Draw a horizontal line on the screen exactly three inches lower than the distance from the ground to the center of the headlamps. Measure the horizontal distance from the centerline of the vehicle to the center of the

headlamps and draw short vertical lines on the screen corresponding to the centerline of each headlamp.

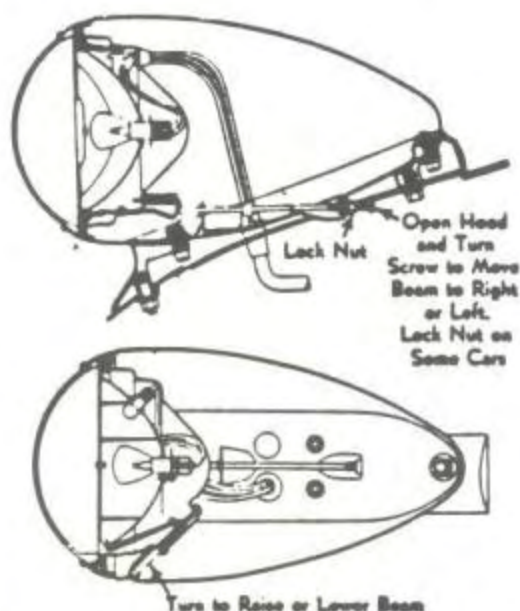
If your car is equipped with focusing screws on the back of the headlamps, first adjust the focus of each lamp. Turn the adjusting screw until the "hot spot" (brightest area of the beam) as seen on the screen is as narrow as possible from top to bottom.

When adjusting the aim of the lamps, cover one at a time while adjusting the other so that stray light does not interfere. We have learned from experience that many owners do not know how to adjust the aim of their headlamps. For location of aiming adjustment screws on various cars see the condensed data below.

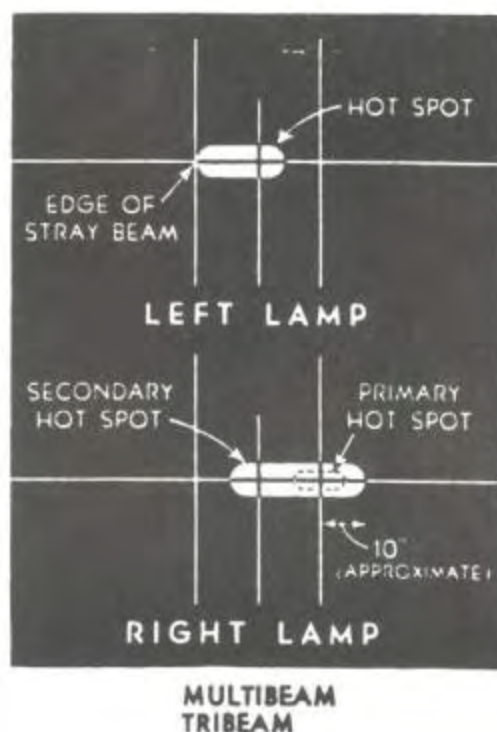
Recommended beam aiming patterns for 1934 to 1940 cars are on page 20.

Lens Removal and Aiming

The following paragraphs, numbered from 1 to 20, explain how to remove lenses and aim headlamps while the Lamp Adjusting Chart on this page tells you which numbered paragraph to refer to



6 To remove lens, remove screw at bottom of clamp and remove rim and lens.



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38 Also Selling Plugs for Radio Seperate		7.00	ea
38 Rear License Plate Bracket		10.00	
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38 Rear End (Torque Tub, Rear End Guts, Axles, Etc.)	(Century)	200.00	set
38 Dash	(Century)	25.00	
38 Battery Box	(Century)	5.00	
38 Running Boards	(Century)	75.00	pr
38 Rear Arm Rest Ash Trays	(Century)	10.00	pr
38 Hood	(Century)	45.00	
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38 Rear Fender	(Special & Century)	35.00	ea
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460 Duncan St.
San Francisco, CA 94131 415/285-8217

FOR SALE: 37 series 40 starter (734Z)--\$25; 37-38 all series starter Bendix drive NOS (1874156)--\$20; 38 radio, lights up but does not play--\$135; 37-38 series 40 timing chain NOS (1266655)--\$35; two 37 hubcaps, need plating--\$15 each; 37-38 all series rear brake hose--\$6; 37 series 40 water pump--\$10; 37-38 series 40, 60 shocks: one pair fronts, 1947-A right & 1947-B left; one pair 37 rears, 1713-A right & 1713-B left; one only 1947-A--\$20 each shock; 37 40,60 series dash stripped and primed--\$15; 37-38 series 40 brake linings for two wheels, no shoes--\$10. SHIPPING EXTRA ON ALL PARTS.

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WANTED: Sheet metal to patch 23-year project. I bought my 1938 Special (41 4-dr.) in 1965. I was a high school student of very limited funds and even more modest skills. It was much easier to remove rusted sheet metal than to replace it. While I made some mechanical improvements (piston rings, adjusting main bearings, rebabbiting a couple of rods), the body work never got beyond the pop-rivet-patch stage. About twenty years ago, I bought some nice fenders from Arizona, but, as all rust-belt veterans can attest, new fenders aren't very useful if there's nothing to bolt them onto. The worst-rusted main body sections were also the most complex: compound curves abound.

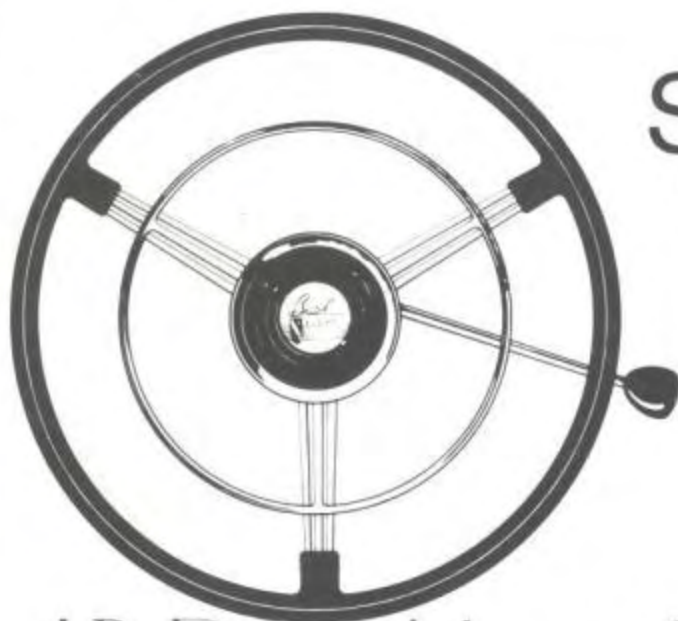
What I need are sheet metal body sections: the full-width section at the bottom of the trunk lid (i.e., under the trunk lid), and the right and left doglegs behind the lower part of the rear doors. I would even consider a whole body sans upholstery, fenders, etc., but the sheet metal sections from an otherwise-useless body would be best. Help me get my car on the road after almost a quarter-century of neglect!

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Cream City--Berndt Buick, 2400 S. 108 (Hwy. 100), Milwaukee, WI. May 21. Mike Kapczynski - 414/543-7765.

Gopher State--Walser Buick, Hwy. 494 & Penn Ave., Bloomington, MN. April 30-May 1. Jim Wright - 612/944-3072.

San Gabriel--Pasadena Elks, 400 W. Colorado Blvd., Pasadena, CA. May 1. Larry Harsha--818/351-0183.

Maryland--Keech Buick, Ellicott City, MD. June 4. Jerry Hall--301/653-9397.

BCA National--Flint, MI. July 7-10. Joseph Taubitz--313/655-8988.

BCA Eastern Regional--Holiday Inn, East, Bethlehem, PA. July 15-17. Barbara Misuraca, P. O. Box 408, Netcong, NJ 07857.

BCA Great Lakes Regional--Stouffer Hotel, Dublin, OH (Columbus). August 4-7. Bud Penn--614/882-8152.

AACA SHOWS

Norwich, NY--May 29. Bob Costello--607/965-8885.

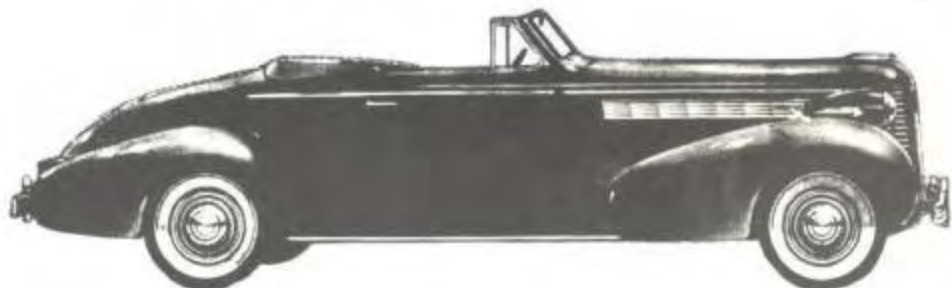
Orange Park, FL--May 14. Doug Cooke--904/388-4342.

Winchester, VA--May 7. Linda Comontofski--304/267-6471

Winchester, TN.--May 7. Bill Limbaugh--615/967-0737.

Many, many others! See Hemmings or Cars & Parts.

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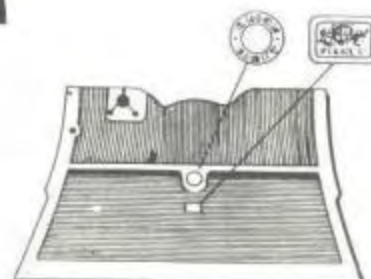
HERE ARE SOME OF
OUR 1937-38 ITEMS!

1937-49 STROMBERG CARB OVERHAUL KITS SER.40-60	CK-379S	\$25.00
1937-40 CARTER " " " " 40-60	CK-370C	\$21.00
1937-51 STROMBERG CARB " " 60-70-80-90	CK-371S	\$23.00
1937 SHOP MANUAL FULL SIZE REPRINT -ALL SER	SM-37F	\$30.00
1938 " " " " " " " " " " " "	SM-38F	\$35.00
1937 OWNERS " " " " " " " " " " " "	OM-37	\$ 6.50
1938 " " " " " " " " " " " "	OM-38	\$ 6.50
1937 RADIO SERVICE MANUAL " " " " " " " "	RS-37	\$ 6.00
1938 " INSTALLATION MANUAL " " " " " " " "	RS-38	\$ 5.00
1937 FISHER BUICK ONLY BODY MAN* SER.40-60	FM-37	\$12.00
1938 " ALL 6M " " " " " " " "	FM-37B	\$12.00



1938 BUICK ACCESSORIES FACTS BOOKLET REPRINT	SL-38A	\$ 3.00
1938 1938 SALES "NEWSPAPER" PHOTO'S 15" X 23"	SL-388M	\$ 6.00
1929-42 BODY & CHASSIS PARTS BOOKS 2-VOLUMES	PB-312	\$50.00PR
1937 INSTRUMENT CLUSTER SILK-SCREENED GLASS	D6-37	\$27.00
1938 " " " " " " " " " " " "	D6-38	\$27.00
1937-38 CLOCK or RADIO(CHOICE)* " " " "	X6-XX	\$16.00
1937-38 FRONT FENDER FROSTED GLASS LENS	PL-37B	\$17.50
1937-40 WIPER ARM - CHROME - ALL SER.	WA-360	\$12.00
1937-38 " BLADE 8-1/4"	WB-8	\$ 4.00
1936-39 SPARK & ROCKER CVR ZINC PLTED ACORN NUT	AN-369	\$ 2.00
1933-52 FENDER WELL ANCOR NUTS W/TAB	WN-332	\$ 1.00

1937-38 ENG. & INTERIOR DECAL & DETAIL SET 17PCS	DS-377	\$39.00SET
1937/38 HOOD ORNAMENT (SPECIFY)	HO-3X	\$75.00
1937 HUB CAP - GREAT COPY - PAINTED LETTERS	HO-37	\$60.00
1937-42 CONVERTABLE CHROME DOOR LOCK BUTTONS	LB-372	\$ 7.50
1937 ACCELERATOR PEDAL W/NEW STEELE CORE-BLK	AP-390BK	\$25.00
1937-53 REPLACEMENT SPEEDO CABLE	SC-373	\$16.95
1933-38 PAD, FRONT SUPPORT.REPLACES #1271631	SP-338	\$ 9.00/PR
1937-53 UPPER CONTROL ARM BUMPER - SNAP-IN TYPE	UB-373	\$ 5.00
1937-38 FRONT LOWER ARM BUMPER-CLAMP MOUNT-SER?	LB-3XX	\$18.00/PR
1936-53 EXHAUST DEFLECTOR-DOUBLE WALL ACCES.COPY	ED-363	\$13.75
1937-38 ANTENNA INSULATOR RUNNING BOARD MOUNT	RI-378	\$35.00 PR



1937-38	FRT FLOOR MAT.SER.40-60 COPY.CAN FIT ALL FF-37B	\$150.
1938-40	DECK HANDLE RUBR MNTNG PAD(SUPERIOR COPY)DH-380	\$ 7.00
1937-38	DOOR SILLS ETCHED ALUMINUM PATTERN DS-37B	\$20.00
1932-40	"FISHER BODY" PLATE - PAINTED & W/SCREWS FP-320	\$ 7.00
1929-40	DOOR FERRULES W/RUBBER GROMMET DF-XX	\$ 5.00
1929-40	" "	

Interior Plastics, Door Weather Seals, Electrical items and Much Much More !

These Are Some of The Items in Our 36 Page ALL BUICK Catalog. The Best Illustrated & Indexed Catalog in the BUICK Hobby is \$2.00 or Free Phone Orders. VISA MASTER CHARGE or C.O.D.. Personal Checks OK Include Your 1937-38 BUICK Club Member Number on Mail Orders and Add 10% For Shipping or \$3.00 Whichever is Greater.

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